Appl. No. 10/028,471
Amdt. dated June 14, 2006
Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 Expedited Procedure
Examining Group 2165

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Listing of Claims:

The following listing of claims is provided for the convenience of the Examiner. No amendments to the claims are made in this paper.

1.   (Previously Presented) A method for characterizing market distribution for a business, the method comprising:

determining a location for each of a plurality of business representatives comprised by the business and situated at different geographical locations to provide sales of the business's products;

determining a location for each of a plurality of competitor representatives comprised by one or more competitors and situated at different geographical locations to provide sales of competitor products, wherein each of the one or more competitors competes for sales of products with the business;

populating at least one database with the locations for the business representatives and the locations for the competitor representatives;

from location information in the at least one populated database, calculating a probability that quantifies a level of competition to the business for sales of the business's products, the competition being provided by the one or more competitors providing sales of the competitor products, and the level of competition being quantified in terms of a distance measure between the business and competitor representatives; and

correlating the quantified level of competition with demographic data corresponding to the location information in the at least one populated database.

2.   (Canceled).

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3.   (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein determining the location for each of the plurality of competitor representatives comprises accessing an representative-locator service on an internet web site for the one or more competitors.

4.   (Original) The method recited in claim 3 wherein accessing the representative-locator service is performed automatically by a web robot.

5.   (Original) The method recited in claim 1 wherein determining the location for each of the plurality of competitor representatives comprises accessing an authenticated source identifying transactions performed by the competitor representatives.

6.   (Original) The method recited in claim 5 wherein the authenticated source comprises a publicly available government record.

7 – 9.   (Canceled).

10.   (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1 wherein the demographic data comprise census data.

11.   (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1 further comprising applying a filter criterion to the correlated data to characterize geographic divisions within the demographic data by market penetration.

12.   (Original) The method recited in claim 11 further comprising displaying the locations graphically according to the geographic divisions, wherein the geographic divisions are distinctly displayed according to the filter criterion.

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13.   (Original) The method recited in claim 1 further comprising displaying the locations graphically.

14.   (Original) The method recited in claim 13 wherein displaying the locations graphically comprises displaying the locations on a map.

15.   (Original) The method recited in claim 13, wherein the at least one database includes product information for the business representatives and for the competitor representatives, the method further comprising displaying the product information for at least one of the locations.

16.   (Previously Presented) A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for directing operation of a computer system including a communications system, a processor, and a storage device, wherein the computer-readable program includes instructions for operating the computer system to characterize market distribution for a business in accordance with the following:

maintaining at least one database on the storage device to store a location for each of a plurality of business representatives comprised by the business and situated at different geographical locations to provide sales of the business's products, and to store a location for each of a plurality of competitor representatives comprised by one or more competitors and situated at different geographical locations to provide sales of competitor products, wherein each of the one or more competitors competes for sales of products with the business;

from location information in the at least one database, calculating a probability with the processor that quantifies a level of competition to the business for sales of the business's products, the competition being provided by the one or more competitors providing sales of the competitor products, and the level of competition being quantified in terms of a distance measure between the business and competitor representatives; and

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correlating, with the processor, the quantified level of competition with demographic data corresponding to the location information in the at least one database.

17.   (Canceled).

18.   (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 16 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for determining the location for each of the plurality of competitor representatives by accessing an representative-locator service with the communications system on an internet web sited for the one or more competitors.

19.   (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 16 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for determining the location for each of the plurality of competitor representatives by accessing a publicly available source identifying transactions performed by the competitor representatives.

20 – 21.   (Canceled).

22.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 16 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for operating the processor to apply a filter criterion to the correlated data to characterize geographic divisions within the demographic data by market penetration.

23.   (Original) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 22 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for:

generating a graphical representation of the locations according to the geographic divisions, the graphical representation including a distinction among the geographic divisions according to the filter criterion; and

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transmitting the graphical representation over the communications system.

24 – 25.   (Canceled).

26.   (Previously Presented) A computer system comprising:

a communications system;

a storage device;

a processor in communication with the communications system and the storage device; and

a memory coupled with the processor, the memory comprising a computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for operating the computer system to characterize market distribution for a business, the computer-readable program including:

instructions for maintaining at least one database on the storage device to store a location for each of a plurality of business representatives comprised by the business and situated at different geographical locations to provide sales of the business's products, and to store a location for each of a plurality of competitor representatives comprised by one or more competitors and situated at different geographical locations to provide sales of competitor products, wherein each of the one or more competitors competes for sales of products with the business;

instructions for calculating, from location information in the at least one database, a probability that quantifies a level of competition to the business for sales of the business's products, the competition being provided by the one or more competitors providing sales of the competitor products, and the level of competition being quantified in terms of a distance measure between the business and competitor representatives; and

instructions for correlating the quantified level of competition with demographic data corresponding to the location information in the at least one database.

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27. (Original) The computer system recited in claim 26 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for determining the location of each of the plurality of competitor representatives by accessing an representative-locator service with the communications system on an internet web site for the one or more competitors.

28. (Canceled).

29. (Previously Presented) The computer system recited in claim 26 wherein the computer-readable program further includes instructions for operating the processor to apply a filter criterion to the correlated data to characterize geographic divisions within the demographic data by market penetration.

30. (Original) The computer system recited in claim 26 wherein the memory further comprises a second computer-readable storage medium having a second computer-readable program embodied therein for operating the computer system to populate the at least one database, the second computer-readable program including:

instructions for accessing a representative-locator service maintained by the one or more competitors at an internet web site;

instructions for extracting location information for the plurality of competitor representatives from the representative-locator service; and

instructions for storing the location information in the at least one database.

31. (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1, wherein calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprises calculating a probability that at least one of the competitor representatives exists within a predetermined distance of each business representative.

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32.   (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1, wherein calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprises calculating a probability that at least one of the business representatives exists within a predetermined distance of each competitor representative.

33.   (Previously Presented) The method recited in claim 1, wherein calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprises calculating a probability that any of the competitor representatives exists within a predetermined distance of any of the business representatives.

34.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 16, wherein the instructions for calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprise instructions for calculating a probability that at least one of the competitor representatives exists within a predetermined distance of each business representative.

35.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 16, wherein the instructions for calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprise instructions for calculating a probability that at least one of the business representatives exists within a predetermined distance of each competitor representative.

36.   (Previously Presented) The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 16, wherein the instructions for calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprise instructions for calculating a probability that any of the competitor representatives exists within a predetermined distance of any of the business representatives.

37.   (Previously Presented) The computer system recited in claim 26, wherein instructions for calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprise

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instructions for calculating a probability that at least one of the competitor representatives exists within a predetermined distance of each business representative.

38.   (Previously Presented) The computer system recited in claim 26, wherein the instructions for calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprise instructions for calculating a probability that at least one of the business representatives exists within a predetermined distance of each competitor representative.

39.   (Previously Presented) The computer system recited in claim 26, wherein the instructions for calculating the probability that quantifies the level of competition comprise instructions for calculating a probability that any of the competitor representatives exists within a predetermined distance of any of the business representatives.